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but the Russian law. The Turanian Turks are affected by Mahometanism about as much as they are by Russian Orthodoxy. It would be misleading to give the official estimate,[1] but about two-thirds of them still adhere to the form of animistic religion known as Shamanism. As far as the Turanian Turks are concerned, therefore, Mahometanism fails as a guide for identifying the Turk.

The religion of the Turks who were responsible for the inscriptions found in the Yenisei and Orkhon valleys, seems to have been the same Shamanism which is still to be found in a comparatively vital state among many Turanians, especially the Altai 'Tatars' and the Yakut. If we take Shamanism as a form of animistic religion which originated in Asia, and which differs from the animistic religions of other parts of the world in its conception of the gods and in the nature of its propitiatory ceremonies, then we shall not find in any other part of Central and Northern Asia a more typical and more highly developed form of it than among these people. At the same time it must be remembered that Shamanistic conceptions underlie many of the high religious systems of the Asiatic continent.

A strongly marked dualism is present, the good and the evil deities being comparable in the various tribes, though known under different names. Taking the Altai 'Tatars' as typical Shamanists, their chief benevolent god at the present time, as in the seventh century, and possibly earlier,[2] is *Ulgen*. The chief malevolent god is *Erlik*. The sphere of activity of the former, and all

[1] See note to p. 22.

[2] I. P. Melioranski, 'On the Orkhon and Yenisei Memorial Inscriptions', *J. Min. Educ.*, June, 1898, St. Petersburg.

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the spirits dependent on him, is the region above the earth, and of the latter the region below the earth. Their realms meet *on* the earth. Erlik is sometimes represented as a bear, e.g. among the Altaians.[1] Generally speaking there is no animal worship, but some animals are venerated. The greatest veneration is shown to the bear, occasionally to the wolf, and of birds, to the eagle, the hawk, and the goose. These creatures, as well as some fish, play an important part in the Shamanistic ceremonies, for when the Shaman's spirit-assistants appear at his call, they are supposed to assume the forms of animals.[2] It is, however, not in this veneration, but rather in the use of the clan-crests or *tamgas*, that any approach to totemism among these people must be sought.

The sky, sometimes called *Tengri*, is venerated as being the home of the good spirits, and they themselves are sometimes called *Tengri* also. To ward off the destructive power of the malevolent god, and to ensure the protection of his benevolent rival, a caste of priests, called Shamans (the name varying according to the tribe), performs religious ceremonies in which the sacred drum (*tiungur*) plays an important rôle. In some tribes, e.g. the Yakut, there is a white Shaman who propitiates the good power, and a black Shaman who has to deal with the dark power. All these tribes believe in various lesser gods, among them a female deity who presides over birth. She is called *Umai* by the Altaians, *Ayisit* by the Yakut.[3]

[1] N. N. Kosmin, *Chern*, p. 102.

[2] M. A. Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia*, Oxford, 1914, pp. 277–82.

[3] M. A. Czaplicka, *op. cit.*, p. 141, and Chaps. VII and VIII. See also 'The Influence of Environment upon the Religious Ideas and